

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CU-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2422
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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 1149

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, AG
SUBJ: STUDENT OUTBREAK
REF: ALGIERS 1139

1. HAVE MORE DETAILS ON EVENTS AT UNIVERSITY FROM UNIVERSITY SOURCE WHO CONSIDERED RELIABLE OBSERVER. HE UNABLE CONFIRM REPORTS OF DEATHS, BUT DOES STATE THERE WAS SERIOUS VIOLENCE AT LAW AND POLITICAL SCIENCE FACULTY (BEN AKOUN) MORNING MAY 9. STUDENTS FROM ARABIC-LANGUAGE WING OF LAW FACULTY PROTESTED THEIR LACK OF REPRESENTATION IN ELECTIONS FOR MAY 19 YOUTH CONGRESS BY ATTACKING STUDENTS OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE WING WHO WERE MANNING POLS AT UNIVERSITY. USING CHAINS AND BROKEN BOTTLES THEY TERRORIZED UNIVERSITY FOR SEVERAL HOURS AND WREAKED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE UNTIL FINALLY BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL BY OTHER STUDENTS. FOUR PERSONS TAKEN TO HOSPITAL. UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES APPARENTLY DID NOT CALL IN POLICE OR MILITARY AND THESE UNITS DID NOT INTERFERE ON THEIR OWN. UNIVERSITY CLOSED DOWN OVER WEEKEND BUT DID REOPEN MONDAY MORNING. SITUATION NOW QUIET BUT TENSE.

2. GENESIS OF ARABAPHONE PROTEST IS INTERESTING. ACCORDING SOURCE, ONE OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CANDIDATURE IS ACTIVITY IN VOLUNTEER PROGRAM BY WHICH STUDENTS SPEND WEEKENDS AND VACATIONS EXPLAINING AGRARIAN REFORM TO PEASANTS AND HELPING WITH FARM WORK. STUDENTS IN ARABIC-LANGUAGE FACULTY INCLUDE CONFIDENTIAL

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SONS OF MORE CONSERVATIVE RURAL ELEMENTS, QADIS, LANDOWNERS,

ETC., WHO TEND TO OPPOSE LAND REFORM AND WHO HAVE NOT BEEN ACTIVE IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES. THEY THEREFORE UNREPRESENTED AMONG CANDIDATES. VOLUNTEERS, ON OTHER HAND, TEND TO COME FROM FRENCH-LANGUAGE FACULTY, WHICH LOOKS DOWN NOSE AT THOSE IN ARABIC PROGRAM IN ANY EVENT. TWO LANGUAGE GROUPS GENERALLY HAVE LITTLE COMMUNICATION WITH EACH OTHER IN ANY CASE, EXCEPT TO TRADE INSULTS, AND TENSION ENDEMIC.

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